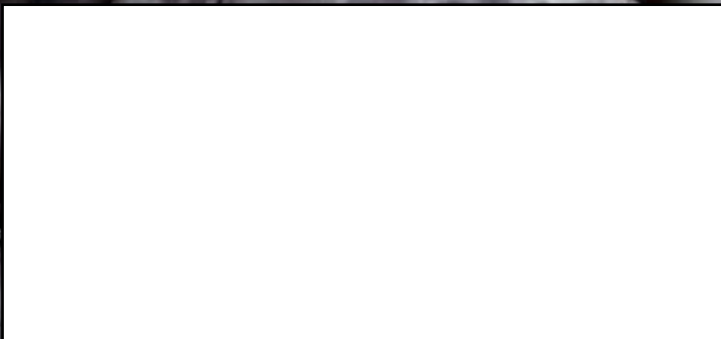


INSIDE



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SUMMER 2022



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ON THE COVER: An SMSD student gets ready for Kindergarten in Jump Start to Learning.



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8200 W. 71st Street
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Inside Shawnee Mission School District is published by the Communication Department in the Shawnee Mission School District.

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THE HUB

Updates from Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard

One of the best times of the school year is here! I am so excited for all of us to begin the 2022-2023 school year.

As superintendent, a favorite time for me each week is when I get to visit schools across the district. Through these visits I get to meet many of the thousands of students we serve and see how each one brings their unique voice, stories, and experiences to the classroom.

No matter where I visit, every classroom is different. But, what I also see, in every corner of the district, is how teachers are guiding each of these students on their own personalized learning experience. All of us, whether we are an educator, student, family member, or community member, are striving toward a common goal. That goal is for every student to achieve their full potential.

We know we can do this as ONE Shawnee Mission.

We know how strong we can be when we stick together. We know our students have unlimited possibilities yet to be discovered. We know we can help each child achieve their personal best.

Right now, most of all, I am thrilled to welcome us all to new beginnings, and to share how thankful I am for all of the ways our community supports student success. I wish everyone an amazing school year.



Dr. Michelle Hubbard



Ready for Students



I'm so proud of educators across the district for their work to get ready for this school year. This summer, more than 1,500 of us attended a one-of-a-kind conference hosted by the SMSD in partnership with Solution Tree. This conference focused on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and strategies we all will be using as educators to achieve better results for students. You can read more about this incredible opportunity later in this issue.

In recent weeks, new educators have attended a New Team Member Academy to learn more about working in the SMSD. Administrators gathered for a leadership retreat in late July and all educators have engaged in professional development to strengthen their skills as the school year begins. Our Strategic Plan mission notes how the SMSD has talented, compassionate educators and I'm proud of how they show up every day and work together for our students.

Summer Learning

Even though it was summer, there were a number of very active classrooms across the SMSD. Two programs in particular helped give students a running start on this school year. A group of incoming Kindergartners attended Jump Start to Learning. For several weeks in July, these students get a chance to practice the skills of being a student as well as literacy and numeracy. This helps them to be ready on day one and throughout the year. This summer, six additional schools were able to offer Jump Start because of financial support from the Hall Family Foundation, the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation, and through Title I funding (which is a federally funded program).

A group of students from Kindergarten through fifth grade also joined us this summer for Camp Invention. This was a hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) camp. This gave students a weeklong experience full of solving problems and having fun. We thank everyone who provided these and other summer programs for our students.



SMSD Achievements

Our students and staff continue to make us all proud. Here is a look at some recent honors received in the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD):

- All comprehensive high schools are ranked on the 2022 U.S. News and World Report list of Best U.S. High schools. The rankings are based on college readiness, college curriculum breadth, state assessment proficiency, state assessment performance, underserved student performance, and graduation rate. Shawnee Mission East was ranked as the #3 school in Kansas.

- Crestview Elementary and Merriam Park Elementary are 2021 Challenge Award recipients. Challenge Awards recognize Kansas schools that are making a notable difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in their school population. Only 100 schools in Kansas are recognized with this award, administered by the Confidence in Education Task Force.

- Nine members of the Class of 2022 were named Presidential Scholars candidates. These students, representing all comprehensive high schools, were among approximately 5,000 candidates named out of nearly 3.6 million high school seniors across the country. Graduates from the Class of 2022 made up a phenomenal class and we congratulate the nearly 2,000 students who graduated this spring.



- Shawnee Mission South and Shawnee Mission West high schools were named 2022 All Stars as part of the APPLY Kansas campaign. These awards, presented for the first time this year, were announced at the June Kansas Board of Regents meeting. The APPLY Kansas Campaign is a statewide program sponsored by the Kansas Board of Regents to increase students' post-secondary planning. Both schools held events that provided students and their families dedicated time and support as they completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and for filling out college applications. They also held a college signing day, celebrating the different paths seniors choose after graduation. 📌

SMSD STRONG

Strong Schools, Strong Community

When Westwood View students and staff begin the new school year, they will be walking into a brand new elementary school building.

The new facility is being built through a \$264 million bond issue approved by voters in 2021. The district held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new school in May 2021, and construction began shortly after. This spring, Westwood View teachers took their first tours of the new building.

As she toured the building, fourth-grade teacher Sarah Harvey said she was grateful to everyone who has worked to make the new building a reality.

“I’m excited to see what is possible in this new space,” she expressed.

The new Westwood View building will feature:

- Flexible learning spaces for student collaboration
- Technology integrated throughout the building
- Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design (LEED) certification

- Outdoor classrooms and dining area
- Safety and security features installed to district standards
- A soccer field, walking trails, and universally-inclusive playground equipment

Principal Kathy Keith celebrated the friendships and memories that have been built by the Westwood View community and encouraged everyone to maintain that incredible spirit as moving day approached.

“It is not the bricks and mortar that make Westwood View a special place,” Keith reflected. “It is the students, parents, teachers, administrators and community members that make the school very special.”

As Westwood View opens, work continues on other bond-funded elementary school rebuilds. John Dimer Elementary is expected to open in early 2023, with a new Pawnee Elementary expected to open in the

summer of 2023. A groundbreaking for the new Rushton Elementary is scheduled for January 2023. Planning and design for Tomahawk Elementary will follow.

The district also celebrates the completion of:

- A 3-story addition and restroom renovations at Indian Woods
- A commons area remodel and restroom renovations at Shawnee Mission Northwest
- A weight room addition and restroom renovations at Shawnee Mission North
- District-wide security upgrades
- HVAC replacements, playground updates, and furniture replacement

In the 2022-2023 school year, we anticipate the completion of remodeling funded by bond proceeds at:

- Horizons
- Westridge Middle School
- Shawnee Mission East High School
- The Shawnee Mission Early Childhood Education Center.



A new addition to Indian Woods Middle School has provided upgrades to student learning spaces. Through the bond, Indian Woods will also have classroom furniture replacement and restroom renovations.



Top: Westwood View students will have outdoor learning spaces when their new school opens. Bottom left: A new classroom at Westwood View Elementary. Bottom right: Shawnee Mission Northwest students will have a newly remodeled commons area.

Upgrades on HVAC systems, playgrounds and furniture replacement in buildings across the district will also continue.

The approved bond enabled expenses previously funded through the capital outlay fund for new facilities to be covered with bond funds. This allowed the district to shift custodial and maintenance salaries into the capital fund, freeing up money in the operating fund to hire additional secondary teachers to better support student learning. The district began the first phase of the adjustment in the 2021-2022 school year, and has fully implemented the second phase of this adjustment for the 2022-2023 school year. ♦





Making Learning Real in Shawnee Mission

Implementing MVAs in SMSD

Students in the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) are getting a head start on their future by taking advantage of Real World Learning opportunities while still in high school.

In partnership with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and other districts across the Kansas City metro area, SMSD is giving students the opportunity to obtain a Market Value Asset (MVA). The partnership goal is that by 2030 every graduate will receive a diploma and at least one MVA to highlight on their resume.

Market Value Assets are defined as industry valued and recognized skills acquired in high school that create a more seamless transition from school

to postsecondary education and/or the workplace.

“MVAs set students up for success by helping them discover options for college and career and by preparing them for their futures,” according to Dr. Ryan Flurry, principal of the Center for Academic Achievement and the Career Technical Center and coordinator for Career and Technical Education.

There are four categories of MVAs:

1. Work Experience - client-connected projects and internships
2. College Credit - nine or more college credit hours
3. Industry-Recognized Credentials - credentials specific to an industry or career field

4. Entrepreneurial Experiences - student driven solutions to social or market problems

By gaining immersive experiences in their field of interest, students gain tangible skills to help navigate their future. Local businesses also benefit in engaging in real world learning by helping to prepare today’s students to become the talent of tomorrow.

Meet three Shawnee Mission students who have earned an MVA.

Zach Meerdink, a senior at SM West, is planning to continue a family tradition of joining the fire service.

To prepare for his chosen career, Meerdink is enrolled in Shawnee Mission’s public safety Signature Program, Project Blue Eagle. He is also

earning an Emergency Medical Technician Certificate through Johnson County Community College to receive both high school and college credit.

Meerdink believes this industry recognized credential will help set him apart. “By the time I graduate from West, I’ll have all my college certificates that I’ll need to apply at any fire department,” shared Meerdink. “It 100% will help me in my next steps. Especially applying for the fire academy, they see that you’re in the Blue Eagle program so they know you already have two years of training and I’ll have my certificates. I’ll be job ready by the time I graduate.”

Dorian Sanders, a recent graduate of SM South, spent part of his senior year interning at Midtown Signs, where he designed signs and products for clients throughout the metro area.

While at Midtown Signs, his primary project was creating a complete restoration of a concession stand at the Kauffman Stadium for the Royals. “Working with the Royals has been a blast,” said Sanders. “Through this internship I learned about materials I haven’t worked with yet and learned a ton about how to design things to be fabricated for real-world use.”

Sanders will be attending Kansas State University in the fall and plans to work toward a master’s degree in industrial and product design. “This internship has given me a huge leg up against other designers and has helped me to start building my resume,” expressed Sanders.

Sneha Thomas, a senior at SM East, interned at Cerner during her junior year. While at Cerner, Thomas worked on data organization projects, and also with a small team to create a weekly internal newsletter.

The experience helped

Thomas narrow her interest to computer science within the field of engineering.

She also credits the internship for helping her develop the real-world skills of communication, problem-solving, and managing deadlines. “Now I have some experience and I have more of an insight in the job field. I enjoyed working on real projects with real deadlines,” shared Thomas.

After high school, Thomas plans to study engineering in college and is interested in game development, which combines her dual interests in programming and design.

Market Value Assets are an exciting component of the Shawnee Mission School District’s Real World Learning initiative. For additional information visit: <https://www.smsd.org/academics/real-world-learning>.

If your business would like to provide students with real world work experiences, please contact Laura Harsch, Business to Education Program Officer at lauraharsch@smsd.org or 913.993.9367. ♦



Top: Sneha Thomas, SM East, interned at Cerner. Below: Dorian Sanders, SM South, participates in a Real World Learning panel.

PLC Institute

Educators Strengthen Skills to Support Student Learning

More than 1,500 educators in our community gathered this summer for a one-of-a-kind professional development conference centered around helping students achieve their full potential.

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) Professional Learning Community (PLC) Institute, provided by Solution Tree, was held for two and a half days. This was the first time Solution Tree has partnered with an individual district to provide access to the institute to all employees.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are schools that empower educators to work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. At the heart of the work are four critical questions that drive the daily actions of every team member:

1. What is it we want our students to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know if each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn it?
4. How will we extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

“We are honored to be the first district to host an institute like this. It provides our Shawnee Mission teachers with an amazing opportunity to make a huge difference for students,” shared Dr. Brittany Gonser, director of professional learning.

There are several fundamental steps teachers take to make PLCs successful, according to Brandon Jones, author and Solution Tree consultant. These steps include:

- Working together to accomplish goals, not in isolation
- Focusing on student learning, not just the teaching of teachers
- Focus on results, not just intentions

Many educators in the SMSD currently dedicate time and skills during the week to PLCs. This fall, the middle school schedule will officially shift to allow middle school teachers time for PLC work.

As a secondary teacher who teaches an elective, Family and Consumer Sciences, Theresa Love’s job is sometimes called a “singleton.” Singletons are often the only teacher in a building teaching a certain subject, usually an “elective.” However, PLCs provide more ways to collaborate with other “electives” teachers and staff throughout the building, even in a “singleton” position, she shared.

“It helps us all move away from the idea of me to we,” Love noted. “Instead of thinking of our jobs as ‘I’m the teacher,’ this helps us think ‘We are the teachers and these are our students.’”

It didn’t take long during her first year as a teacher to



Mike Mattos, author, presenter, and practitioner, speaks to Professional Learning Community Institute attendees.

realize how valuable it is to work collaboratively, Amy Sachse, Corinth third grade teacher and Kansas Teacher of the Year semifinalist, expressed.

“Two heads are better than one and if you leverage the skills of everyone it will benefit students,” Sachse shared. “I hope our families know that their child doesn’t just have the power of one teacher. They have the power of all teachers in a building, and even across our district working to help them succeed.”

This unique institute was paid for using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. It was a top priority for the elementary, middle, and high school ESSER committees when they formed recommendations for how the funds would be spent. The training teachers received at this institute directly addressed areas of the district’s Strategic Plan and will help educators manage learning loss, as required as part of ESSER allotments. In previous years, when the institute was offered in other locations across the country, the district was only able to send a select few.

It was a thrill to be able to go to the institute and know colleagues were receiving consistent training, noted Kelly Bornheimer, instructional coach at Rising Star.

“Everyone walked in and had smiles on their faces that were so big,” Bornheimer added. “Teachers have been wanting to attend this institute for so long.”

According to Solution Tree’s Brandon Jones, holding this institute and having so many attend says a lot about the dedication of SMSD educators, especially after the challenges of the last few years.

“They are saying ‘We are committed to the kids in this community and we’re committed to the parents in this community to get even better than we were before,’” he added. “I think that speaks volumes to your district and the commitment of the teachers.” ♦

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Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Celebrates Five Years of Leadership Program



The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation recently celebrated its fifth year of Leadership Shawnee Mission, a leadership development program for incoming juniors and seniors held in partnership with William Jewell College and the Tucker Leadership Lab.

During the intensive two-week program students participate in activities and exercises designed to hone their leadership skills. Through a variety of interactive activities, they explore topics like conflict resolution, communication, responsibility, and trust.

To commemorate the anniversary, students from all graduating classes of Leadership Shawnee Mission were invited back for a reunion and cook-out at the Center for Academic Achievement.

"Five years ago, I couldn't have imagined the leadership program would grow into what it is today," shared Kim Hinkle, executive director of the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation. "I'm thrilled to welcome the students back to find out what they've been doing."

Carlos Ramos graduated from the first Leadership class in 2018. After high school, he started his career at Top Golf, where he refined management and customer service skills by taking advantage of the training classes offered by the company.

Ramos recently accepted a new role in solar panel sales. He attributes this positive career step to networking and the power of a good resume, skills that are highlighted in the Leadership Shawnee Mission program. Ramos expressed that he would encourage recent leadership graduates to work hard and to keep adding skills to their resume. "Having a good resume makes life a lot easier."

Jetzel Chavira, Leadership Shawnee Mission class of 2019, is currently a junior at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and holds a Mellon Curatorial Fellowship at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Chavira credits Leadership Shawnee Mission for teaching her the skills that helped her on her path after graduation.

"I'm not exaggerating, Leadership Shawnee Mission truly led me to where I am now," shared Chavira. "In high school, I didn't know how important the power of networking would be later. The leadership skills I learned have helped me get so many opportunities."

Leadership Shawnee Mission class of 2019 graduate Lee Marshall is currently a student at Baker University majoring in communication studies. Marshall is on the football team and works in the admissions office as an admissions assistant, meeting prospective students and giving campus tours.

Marshall shared that the Leadership program was a great experience. In addition to preparing him for the future, it also was the catalyst for forming lasting friendships.

“I’m so glad to have been a part of this program,” expressed Marshall.

Matt Linscott was part of the 2020 class of Leadership Shawnee Mission. He is studying biology at Missouri Western and plans to transfer to the University of Kansas. Although he started on a pre-med educational track, he’s come to realize that his passion is in research. “I’m a nerd for science, I love science so much. Even though the medical track isn’t right for me, I’m still going to be able to help people,” shared Linscott.

Linscott noted that the Leadership Shawnee Mission program helped him see himself and others in new ways. “It helped me come out of my box, introduced me to new aspects and new ways of thinking. At the start of the program I was more shy, but it helped me become more outgoing.”

Every year, the Leadership Shawnee Mission program has continued to change and grow. One thing that has not changed is the goal to shape the next generation of leaders.

“I hope that Leadership Shawnee Mission continues to expand, and that our students take the skills they learn to go out and change the world for the better,” expressed Hinkle.

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation advances scholarship and leadership to enable all Shawnee Mission students to achieve their full potential. To learn more about the Leadership Shawnee Mission program, visit www.smef.org. ♦



Leadership Shawnee Mission participants pose for photos and catch up at the reunion.

The Fall Breakfast Returns!

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation Fall Breakfast is back and in-person for the first time in two years! The Fall Breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2022, at the Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Boulevard, Overland Park.

Join us as students and staff take the stage to celebrate the start of the new school year and the positive impact we can make when we work together as one Shawnee Mission. The event also features Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard in conversation with Shawnee Mission students along with performances by special musical guests.

Mark your calendar for an event you won’t want to miss!

The mission of the Shawnee Mission Education Foundation is to advance scholarship and leadership to enable all Shawnee Mission students to achieve their full potential.

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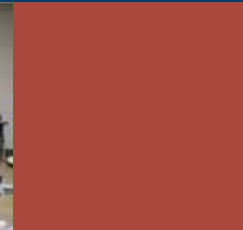
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